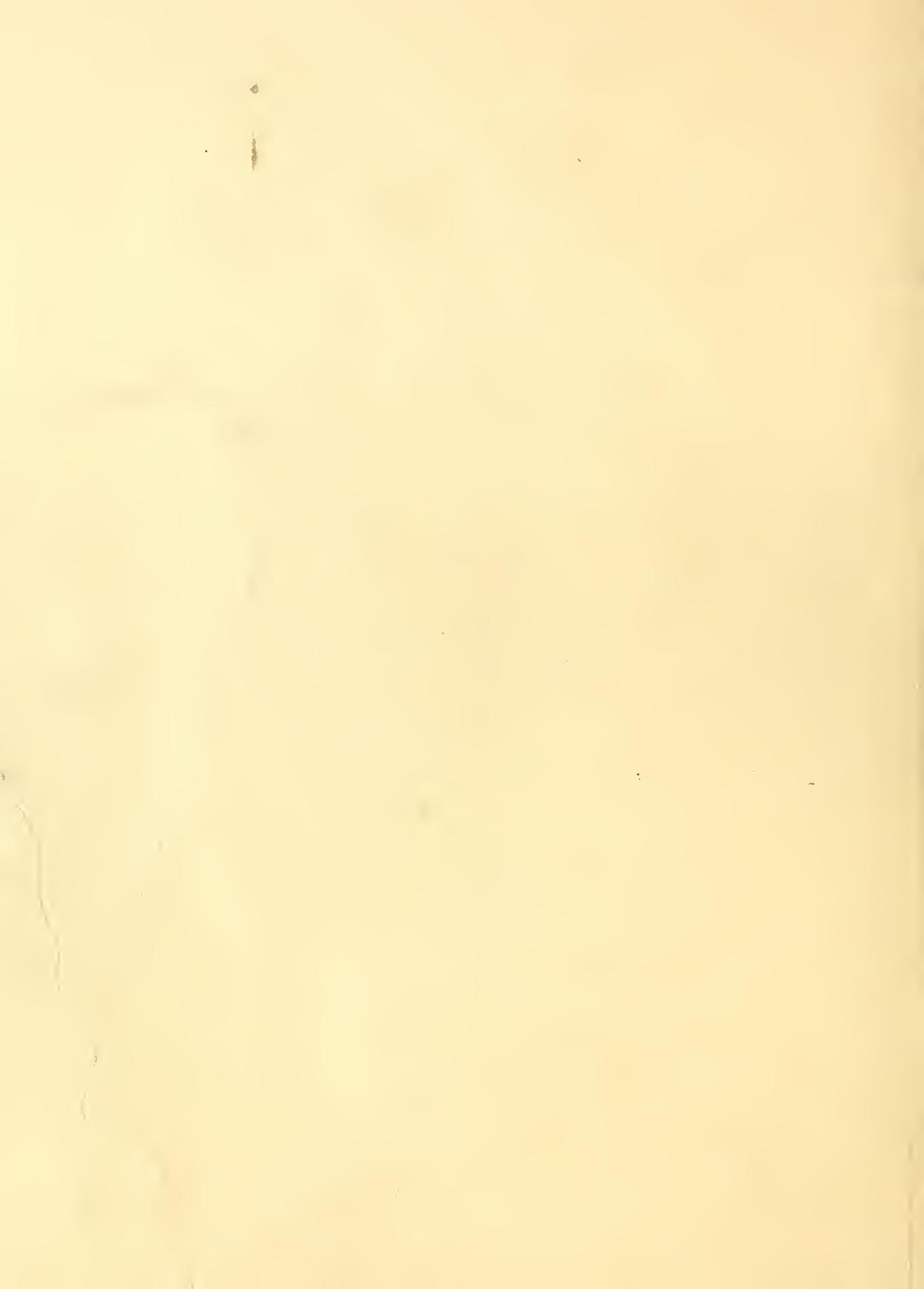


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FOREIGN NEWS ON CITRUS FRUIT

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THE PORTO RICO GRAPEFRUIT INDUSTRY

About 8,300 acres are planted to grapefruit in Porto Rico. Production averaged around 1,200,000 boxes a year during the five-year period 1926-27 to 1930-31. Of this amount 672,000 boxes were shipped fresh and approximately 500,000 boxes were canned. The United States and Porto Rico together produce about 96.5 per cent of the world grapefruit crop, divided 90 per cent to the former and 6.5 per cent to the latter. The United States production during the five-year period under survey averaged 11,756,000 boxes a year against 1,200,000 for Porto Rico. As is the case in the United States, a large percentage of the Porto Rican groves are not yet in full bearing so the Island's production may be expected to increase. Significant progress has been made in the grading and packing of Porto Rican grapefruit a large percentage of which is now government inspected.

Acreage and number of trees

Commercial grapefruit groves in Porto Rico are estimated as covering about 8,300 acres, according to a communication received from Mr. A. S. Mason, Supervising Inspector for the United States Department of Agriculture at San Juan, Porto Rico. This total is composed of 6,120 acres of trees six or more years old, 1,680 acres of trees from two to five years old and 310 acres of trees one to two years old. Plantings have been light this year, amounting to around 200 acres.

Grapefruit groves in Porto Rico are largely planted on open, rolling ground or in small and irregular shaped valleys between hills, so the only possible way to estimate the acreage was to divide the number of trees reported by grove owners by 62 or the average number of trees planted to the acre. The number of trees six years old or older amounted to around 380,000 trees, two to five years old 104,000 trees, one to two years old 19,000 trees, and new plantings about 12,000 trees, or a total of 515,000 trees.

No attempt was made to include in these acreage figures the small scattered groves in different parts of the Island from which no fruit is shipped commercially. The figures given include the commercial plantings of Rio Piedras and Arecibo, which are located along the northern shore of the Island, and the few commercial groves around Morovis and Mayaguez.

Exports and production

Grapefruit exports from Porto Rico averaged, during the five-year period 1926-27 to 1930-31, about 672,000 boxes a year. Grapefruit are exported from Porto Rico the year around but the months of September and October and the period from March to June are the months of heaviest movement. Shipments to the United States from July to October are fairly heavy since the season in this country does not get well under way until October. From October to March the shipments to the United States diminish and much of the fruit moves to foreign markets, especially the United Kingdom. From March through June the competition in the United States is not as keen so shipments increase again. In

recent years direct exports of Porto Rican grapefruit to Europe have increased rapidly. Prior to 1929-30 practically all of the Porto Rican grapefruit that went abroad was shipped from New York. A large share of the exports still move out this way but no separate figures are available which would disclose the quantity.

Grapefruit production in Porto Rico during the 1930-31 season is estimated at approximately 1,200,000 boxes of fruit. Of this amount 521,000 boxes were shipped as fresh fruit and about 450,000 boxes canned or consumed locally. Considerable quantities of grapefruit are canned every season in Porto Rico. The amount of fresh fruit used in this manner is estimated at about 240,000 boxes a year on an average during the five-year period 1925-26 to 1929-30. Shipments of canned grapefruit to the United States averaged 8,318,000 pounds during this period. In 1929-30 shipments to the United States reached 12,415,247 pounds.

UNITED STATES: Receipts of grapefruit from Porto Rico by months, direct shipments of grapefruit from Porto Rico to foreign countries, estimated quantities canned and estimated total commercial production, by fiscal years, 1926-27 to 1930-31

Month	1926-27	1927-28	1928-29	1929-30	1930-31	Average
	Boxes	Boxes	Boxes	Boxes	Boxes	Boxes
July.....	12,200	58,864	56,088	15,501	30,040	34,539
August.....	21,166	30,799	29,943	6,887	15,708	20,901
September.....	171,423	266,286	89,658	36,384	55,469	123,844
October.....	158,102	188,926	5,226	158,106	28,928	107,858
November.....	70,559	28,798	876	56,884	12,960	34,015
December.....	4,876	52,049	3,859	69,916	2,497	26,639
January.....	2,010	45,501	1,445	80,694	3,190	26,568
February.....	15,688	61,465	1,483	75,720	5,570	31,985
March.....	23,038	101,279	929	112,667	36,717	54,926
April.....	28,011	46,446	17,227	184,125	57,326	66,627
May.....	49,697	9,891	2,196	110,966	50,129	44,576
June.....	135,262	1,636	6,407	70,480	129,883	68,734
Total.....	692,032	891,940	215,337	978,330	428,417	641,211
Direct exports from Porto Rico to foreign countries.....	a/	b/ 294	93	58,972	92,435	30,359
Total movement.....	692,032	892,234	215,430	1,037,302	520,852	671,570
Fresh fruit canned c/	265,000	307,000	81,000	355,000	-	-
Estimated total commercial production.....					d/	
	957,032	1,199,234	296,430	1,392,302	1,200,000	1,167,600

Compiled by the Foreign Agricultural Service from the official records of the Bureau of Foreign and Domestic Commerce.

a/ Not available. b/ January to June, 1928. c/ This estimate is made on the basis of one pound of canned fruit to two pounds of fresh fruit. Exports of canned fruit during the fiscal year are assumed to have been produced in that year. d/ Estimated total production.

Future production

About 40 per cent of the trees that are six years or more old are in full production and it is estimated that in five years, taking into consideration the deterioration of the real old trees, the production from this group will be approximately 1,750,000 boxes. The 93,000 trees two to six years old five years from now will probably be producing around 275,000 boxes and the balance of the younger trees about 75,000 boxes. At the end of five years the total production, according to these estimates, should be around 2,100,000 boxes, barring unforeseen catastrophes such as the hurricane in 1928. At the end of ten years this production will likely be increased to a total of 2,500,000 boxes.

Condition of the industry

With the exception of the real old plantings the trees in Porto Rico are generally in very good condition. The foliage is of a healthy green color. Growers are careful with their spray and fertilizer schedules and orchards are generally carefully pruned. Most of the citrus growers have been engaged in citrus production, either here or somewhere in the United States for the last ten or twenty years and consequently are well acquainted with the best methods of cultivation. About 95 per cent of the acreage is owned and managed by Americans.

In the tropics there are three distinct sets of blooms, one in December and January, another in May and June and a third in September and October. This gives practically a year around production of fruit. Most Porto Rican growers try to raise as much 70 size and smaller fruit as possible, as they consider their main market, not in the United States, but in the United Kingdom and Continental Europe.

Most young citrus groves are either planted with pineapples or crotalaria, either crop returning more than a sufficient revenue to pay for the cost of the upkeep of the young groves. Crotalaria seed, as well as pineapples, find a very ready market in the United States.

Approximately 85 per cent of the growers are using government inspection and pack to the United States standard citrus grades. The fruit is packed in the Florida type box. Present indications are that inspection will continue. The better packing has increased average prices so that the Island fruit for the first time has sold for as much, if not more, in the markets of the United States and Europe than the products of Florida, California and the Isle of Pines. At the recent Paris Colonial Exposition stock boxes of Porto Rican United States No. 1 Bright grapefruit took the grand prize in competition with fruits from South Africa, Palestine, California and Florida.

Costs of growing and shipping

Cost of production in Porto Rico is low, according to Mr. Mason. Grove labor is paid 7 cents to 9 cents, graders 9 cents to 11 cents and packing labor 7½ cents to 9½ cents an hour. A good packing house foreman receives about \$20.00 a week. Citrus boxes are selling at the present time in Porto Rico for 21 cents to 22½ cents each. Most of the citrus land in Porto Rico was bought at prices ranging from \$10.00 to \$150.00 an acre, depending on the location and when purchased. Taxes on full-bearing groves range from \$10.00 to \$12.00 an acre. Fertilizer dealers state that Peruvian guano, Chilean nit-

rate and German potash prices are 5 to 8 per cent lower than in the United States. Phosphoric acid is the only fertilizer which costs more in Porto Rico than in the United States. There are some prospects of getting this product more cheaply from the Argentine in the form of bone meal.

Shipping rates from Porto Rico to points in New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania and New England are lower than from Florida. For instance, the refrigerated freight rate on pre-cooled fruit from San Juan to New York is 66 cents a box. The rate to Europe direct from Porto Rico is \$1.25 per box. Most of the European shipments, however, still go by the way of New York, where the freight rate, including pre-cooling is \$1.43 to points in the United Kingdom and Continental Europe. A refrigerator service has been inaugurated from Porto Rico to the Argentine with a proposed freight rate of \$1.00 a box. It is expected that some shipments of grapefruit will go to the Argentine after the crop in that country is cleaned up.

Future markets for Porto Rican grapefruit

Porto Rican growers believe that their low production costs and packing charges and the reasonable freight rates by vessel to the large centers of population in the United States, together with their year-around production, give them an advantage over Florida and Texas. They also feel that they have a distinct advantage in the export market, first, because of their ability to raise the desired small sized fruit and, second, because of the large percentage of bright fruit. There is no doubt that there is considerable less Melinose and Rustmite in Porto Rico than in Florida.

As production increases growers are planning to use Houston, Texas, and Mobile, Alabama, as distributing points before the Texas and Florida seasons start and after they are through. In fact, the steamship lines have already made plans to refrigerate some five or six vessels. Shipments will probably also be made to New Orleans. Direct steamship service is already established with Europe and since there is a growing demand for Porto Rican grapefruit in the United Kingdom and on the Continent it is expected that European sales will increase a great deal.

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